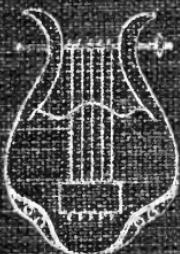


SONGS FROM
• THE GOLDEN GATE •
COOLBRITH





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SONGS FROM THE GOLDEN GATE

BY

INA COOLBRITH

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
WILLIAM KEITH*



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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TO

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN



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SONGS FROM THE GOLDEN GATE.

CALIFORNIA.

WAS it the sigh and shiver of the leaves ?
Was it the murmur of the meadow brook,
That in and out the reeds and water weeds
Slipped silverly, and on their tremulous keys
Uttered her many melodies ? Or voice
Of the far sea, red with the sunset gold,
That sang within her shining shores, and sang
Within the Gate, that in the sunset shone
A gate of fire against the outer world ?

For, ever as I turned the magic page
Of that old song the old, blind singer sang
Unto the world, when it and song were young —
The ripple of the reeds, or odorous,
Soft sigh of leaves, or voice of the far sea —
A mystical, low murmur, tremulous
Upon the wind, came in with musk of rose,
The salt breath of the waves, and far, faint smell
Of laurel up the slopes of Tamalpais. . . .

“ Am I less fair, am I less fair than these,
Daughters of far-off seas ?

Daughters of far-off shores,—bleak, over-blown
With foam of fretful tides, with wail and moan
Of waves, that toss wild hands, that clasp and beat
Wild, desolate hands above the lonely sands,
Printed no more with pressure of their feet:
That chase no more the light feet flying swift
Up golden sands, nor lift
Foam fingers white unto their garment hem,
And flowing hair of them.

“ For these are dead : the fair, great queens are dead !
The long hair’s gold a dust the wind bloweth
Wherever it may list ;
The curvèd lips, that kissed
Heroes and kings of men, a dust that breath,
Nor speech, nor laughter, ever quickeneth ;
And all the glory sped
From the large, marvelous eyes, the light whereof
Wrought wonder in their hearts, — desire, and love !
And wrought not any good :
But strife, and curses of the gods, and flood,
And fire and battle-death !
Am I less fair, less fair,
Because that my hands bear
Neither a sword, nor any flaming brand,
To blacken and make desolate my land,
But on my brows are leaves of olive boughs,
And in mine arms a dove !

“ Sea-born and goddess, blossom of the foam,
Pale Aphrodite, shadowy as a mist

Not any sun hath kissed !
Tawny of limb *I* roam,
The dusks of forests dark within my hair ;
The far Yosemite,
For garment and for covering of me,
Wove the white foam and mist,
The amber and the rose and amethyst
Of her wild fountains, shaken loose in air.
And I am of the hills and of the sea :
Strong with the strength of my great hills, and calm
With calm of the fair sea, whose billowy gold
Girdles the land whose queen and love I am !

Lo ! am I less than thou,
That with a sound of lyres, and harp-playing,
Not any voice doth sing
The beauty of mine eyelids and my brow ?
Nor hymn in all my fair and gracious ways,
And lengths of golden days,
The measure and the music of my praise ?

“ Ah, what indeed is this
Old land beyond the seas, that ye should miss
For her the grace and majesty of mine ?
Are not the fruit and vine
Fair on my hills, and in my vales the rose ?
The palm-tree and the pine
Strike hands together under the same skies
In every wind that blows.
What clearer heavens can shine
Above the land whereon the shadow lies
Of her dead glory, and her slaughtered kings,

And lost, evanished gods ?
 Upon my fresh green sods
 No king has walked to curse and desolate :
 But in the valleys Freedom sits and sings,
 And on the heights above ;
 Upon her brows the leaves of olive boughs,
 And in her arms a dove ;
 And the great hills are pure, undesecrate,
 White with their snows untrod,
 And mighty with the presence of their God !

“ Hearken, how many years
 I sat alone, I sat alone and heard
 Only the silence stirred
 By wind and leaf, by clash of grassy spears,
 And singing bird that called to singing bird.
 Heard but the savage tongue
 Of my brown savage children, that among
 The hills and valleys chased the buck and doe,
 And round the wigwam fires
 Chanted wild songs of their wild savage sires,
 And danced their wild, weird dances to and fro,
 And wrought their beaded robes of buffalo.
 Day following upon day,
 Saw but the panther crouched upon the limb,
 Smooth serpents, swift and slim,
 Slip through the reeds and grasses, and the bear
 Crush through his tangled lair
 Of chapparal, upon the startled prey !

“ Listen, how I have seen
 Flash of strange fires in gorge and black ravine ;

Heard the sharp clang of steel, that came to drain
The mountain's golden vein —
And laughed and sang, and sang and laughed again,
Because that 'now,' I said, 'I shall be known !'
 I shall not sit alone ;
But reach my hands unto my sister lands !
 And they ? Will they not turn
Old, wondering dim eyes to me, and yearn —
 Aye, they will yearn, in sooth,
To my glad beauty, and my glad fresh youth !'

“ What matters though the morn
Redden upon my singing fields of corn !
What matters though the wind's unresting feet
 Ripple the gold of wheat,
 And my vales run with wine,
 And on these hills of mine
The orchard boughs droop heavy with ripe fruit ?
 When with nor sound of lute
Nor lyre, doth any singer chant and sing
 Me, in my life's fair spring :
The matin song of me in my young day ?
But all my lays and legends fade away
From lake and mountain to the farther hem
Of sea, and there be none to gather them.

“ Lo ! I have waited long !
How longer yet must my strung harp be dumb,
 Ere its great master come ?
Till the fair singer comes to wake the strong,
Rapt chords of it unto the new, glad song !

Him a diviner speech
My song-birds wait to teach :
The secrets of the field
My blossoms will not yield
To other hands than his ;
And, lingering for this,
My laurels lend the glory of their boughs
To crown no narrower brows.
For on his lips must wisdom sit with youth,
And in his eyes, and on the lids thereof,
 The light of a great love —
 And on his forehead, truth ! ” . . .

Was it the wind, or the soft sigh of leaves,
Or sound of singing waters ? Lo, I looked,
And saw the silvery ripples of the brook,
The fruit upon the hills, the waving trees,
And mellow fields of harvest ; saw the Gate
Burn in the sunset ; the thin thread of mist
Creep white across the Saucelito hills ;
Till the day darkened down the ocean rim,
The sunset purple slipped from Tamalpais,
And bay and sky were bright with sudden stars.

IN BLOSSOM TIME.

It's O my heart, my heart,
To be out in the sun and sing —
To sing and shout in the fields about,
In the balm and the blossoming !

Sing loud, O bird in the tree ;
O bird, sing loud in the sky,
And honey-bees, blacken the clover beds —
There is none of you glad as I.

The leaves laugh low in the wind,
Laugh low, with the wind at play ;
And the odorous call of the flowers all
Entices my soul away !

For O but the world is fair, is fair —
And O but the world is sweet !
I will out in the gold of the blossoming mould,
And sit at the Master's feet.

And the love my heart would speak,
I will fold in the lily's rim,
That th' lips of the blossom, more pure and meek,
May offer it up to Him.

Then sing in the hedgerow green, O thrush,
O skylark, sing in the blue ;
Sing loud, sing clear, that the King may hear,
And my soul shall sing with you !

A HOPE.

IT befell me on a day —
 Long ago, ah, long ago !
When my life was in its May,
 In the May-month of the year.
 All the orchards were like snow
 With pink-flushes there and here ;
 And a bird sang, building near,
And a bird sang far away,
Where the early twilight lay.

 Long ago ! ah, long ago !
Youth's sweet May passed quite away —
May that never more is May !
 Yet I hear the nightingale
 Singing far adown the vale
 Where the early twilight lies,
Singing sad, and sweet, and strong —
And I wonder if the song
 May be heard in Paradise !

AN ANSWER.

THE wind was very sad among the branches,
The moon had hid its light;
I threw my window open to the darkness,
And looked out on the night;

And thought of all the dear old times together,
Days sweet for her sweet sake,
And all I lost in losing her; till, thinking,
My heart seemed like to break.

And O, I said, if I might have some token
She *is*, and yet is mine,
Though but a wind-tossed leaf, my soul would take it
And bless it, for the sign.

And lo! a little wind sighed through the branches,
The moon shone on the land,
And cool and moist with the night dew, a leaflet
Fluttered against my hand!

A PERFECT DAY.

I WILL be glad to-day : the sun
Smiles all adown the land ;
The lilies lean along the way ;
Serene on either hand,
The full-blown roses, red and white,
In perfect beauty stand.

The mourning-dove within the woods
Forgets, nor longer grieves ;
A light wind lifts the bladed corn,
And ripples the ripe sheaves ;
High overhead some happy bird
Sings softly in the leaves.

The butterflies flit by, and bees ;
A peach falls to the ground ;
The tinkle of a bell is heard
From some far pasture-mound ;
The crickets in the warm, green grass
Chirp with a softened sound.

The sky looks down upon the sea,
Blue, with not anywhere
The shadow of a passing cloud ;
The sea looks up as fair —

So bright a picture on its breast
As if it smiled to wear.

A day too glad for laughter — nay,
Too glad for happy tears !
The fair earth seems as in a dream
Of immemorial years :
Perhaps of that far morn when she
Sang with her sister spheres.

It may be that she holds to-day
Some sacred Sabbath feast ;
It may be that some patient soul
Has entered to God's rest,
For whose dear sake He smiles on us,
And all the day is blest.

THE POET.

He walks with God upon the hills !
And sees, each morn, the world arise
New-bathed in light of paradise.
He hears the laughter of her rills,
Her melodies of many voices,
And greets her while his heart rejoices.
She, to his spirit undefiled,
Makes answer as a little child ;
Unveiled before his eyes she stands,
And gives her secrets to his hands.

LONGING.

O FOOLISH wisdom sought in books !
O aimless fret of household tasks !
O chains that bind the hand and mind —
A fuller life my spirit asks !

For there the grand hills, summer-crowned,
Slope greenly downward to the seas ;
One hour of rest upon their breast
Were worth a year of days like these.

Their cool, soft green to ease the pain
Of eyes that ache o'er printed words ;
This weary noise — the city's voice,
Lulled in the sound of bees and birds.

For Eden's life within me stirs,
And scorns the shackles that I wear ;
The man-life grand — pure soul, strong hand,
The limb of steel, the heart of air !

And I could kiss, with longing wild,
Earth's dear brown bosom, loved so much,
A grass-blade fanned across my hand,
Would thrill me like a lover's touch.

The trees would talk with me ; the flowers
Their hidden meanings each make known —
The olden lore revived once more,
When man's and nature's heart were one !

And as the pardoned pair might come
Back to the garden God first framed,
And hear Him call at even-fall,
And answer, "Here am I," unshamed —

So I, from out these toils, wherein
The Eden-faith grows stained and dim,
Would walk, a child, through nature's wild,
And hear His voice and answer Him.

TWO.

ONE sang all day, more merry than the lark
That mounts the morning skies :
One silent sat, and lifted patient eyes.

One heart kept happy time, from dawn to dark,
With all glad things that be :
One, listless, throbbed alone to memory.

To one all blessëd knowledge was revealed,
And love made clear the way :
One thirsted, asked, and still was answered nay.

To one, a glad, brief day, that slumber sealed
And kept inviolate :
To one, long years, that only knew to wait.

FEBRUARY.

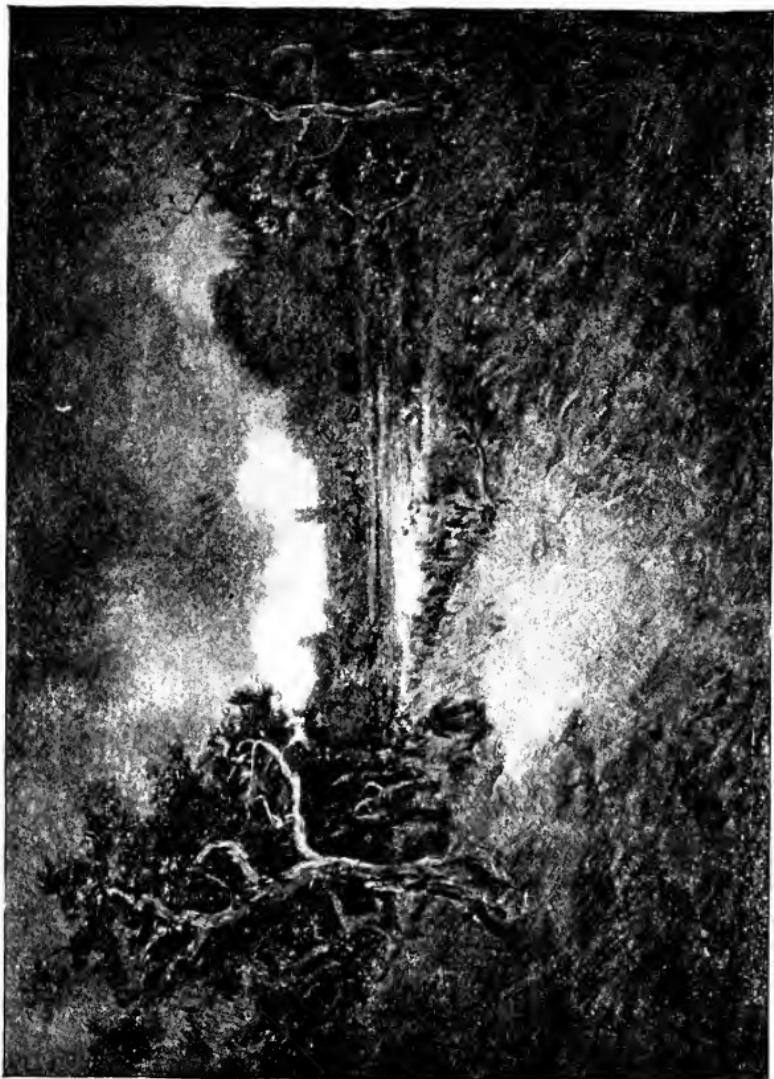
NEWLY wedded, and happy quite,
Careless alike of wind and weather,
Two wee birds, from a merry flight,
Swing in the tree-top, sing together :
Love to them, in the wintry hour,
Summer and sunshine, bud and flower !

So, belovëd, when skies are sad,
Love can render their sombre golden ;
A thought of thee, and the day is glad
As a rose in the dewy dawn unfolden ;
And away, away, on passionate wings,
My heart like a bird at thy window sings !

MY "CLOTH OF GOLD."

O BUT the wind is keen,
And the sky is dull as lead !
If only leaves were brown,
Were only withered and dead,
Perhaps I might not frown,
However the storm might beat ;
But to see their delicate green
Tossing in wind and rain,
Whirling in lane and street,
Trampled in mud and dirt—
Alive to the winter pain,
To the sting and the hurt !

I wish they all were hid
In a fleecy coverlid ;
I wish I could bury the rose
Under the northern snows,
And make the land take off
The purple and red and buff,
And flamy tints that please
Her tropical Spanish taste,
And mantle her shapeliness,
Just once, in the delicate dress
Of her sisters, fairer faced,
Over the seas.



"O BUT THE WIND IS KEEN!"

If but for a single day
This vivid, incessant green
Might vanish quite away,
And never a leaf be seen ;
And woods be brown and sere,
And flowers disappear :
If only I might not see
Forever the fruit on the tree,
The rose on its stem !
For spring is sweet, and summer
Ever a blithe new-comer —
But one tires even of them !

You were pleasant to behold,
When days were warm and bland,
My beautiful "Cloth of Gold,"
My rose of roses, nursed
With careful, patient hand ;
So sunny and content,
With butterflies about you,
And bees that came and went,
And could not do without you :
But better to die at first,
With the earliest blossom born,
Than to live so crumpled and torn,
So dripping and forlorn.

Better that you should be
Safe housed and asleep
Under the tough brown bark,
Like your kindred over the sea ;

Nor know if the day be drear,
Nor heed if the sky be dark,
If it rain or snow.
But ah ! to be captive here,
The live-long, dragging year,
To the skies that smile and weep ;
The skies that thrill and woo you,
That torture and undo you,
That lure and hold you so —
And will not let you go !

WHEN THE GRASS SHALL COVER ME.

WHEN the grass shall cover me,
Head to foot where I am lying,—
When not any wind that blows,
Summer-blooms nor winter-snows,
Shall awake me to your sighing :
Close above me as you pass,
You will say, “ How kind she was,”
You will say, “ How true she was,”
When the grass grows over me.

When the grass shall cover me,
Holden close to earth’s warm bosom,—
While I laugh, or weep, or sing,
Nevermore, for anything,
You will find in blade and blossom,
Sweet small voices, odorous,
Tender pleaders in my cause,
That shall speak me as I was —
When the grass grows over me.

When the grass shall cover me !
Ah, belovéd, in my sorrow
Very patient, I can wait,
Knowing that, or soon or late,
There will dawn a clearer morrow :

When your heart will moan : “ Alas !
Now I know how true she was ;
Now I know how dear she was ” —
When the grass grows over me !

THE MOTHER'S GRIEF.

So fair the sun rose yester-morn,
The mountain cliffs adorning ;
The golden tassels of the corn
Danced in the breath of morning ;
The cool, clear stream that runs before,
Such happy words was saying,
And in the open cottage door
My pretty babe was playing.
Aslant the sill a sunbeam lay :
I laughed in careless pleasure,
To see his little hand essay
To grasp the shining treasure.

To-day no shafts of golden flame
Across the sill are lying ;
To-day I call my baby's name,
And hear no lisped replying ;
To-day — ah, baby mine, to-day —
God holds thee in His keeping !
And yet I weep, as one pale ray
Breaks in upon thy sleeping —
I weep to see its shining bands
Reach, with a fond endeavor,
To where the little restless hands
Are crossed in rest forever !

RETROSPECT.

(IN LOS ANGELES.)

A BREATH of balm — of orange bloom !
By what strange fancy wafted me,
Through the lone starlight of the room ?
And suddenly I seem to see

The long, low vale, with tawny edge
Of hills, within the sunset glow ;
Cool vine-rows through the cactus hedge,
And fluttering gleams of orchard snow.

Far off, the slender line of white
Against the blue of ocean's crest ;
The slow sun sinking into night,
A quivering opal in the west.

Somewhere a stream sings, far away ;
Somewhere from out the hidden groves,
And dreamy as the dying day,
Comes the soft coo of mourning doves.

One moment all the world is peace !
The years like clouds are rolled away,
And I am on those sunny leas,
A child, amid the flowers at play.

MARCH.

HARK, from the budding boughs that burst of song !
And where the leagues of emerald stretch away,
How rings the meadow-lark's ecstatic lay
And all the hills the liquid notes prolong.
The stately callas shine, a saintly throng,
From their broad leaves ; and in her queenly sway,
The royal rose unfolds unto the day.
O gentle March ! O turbulent and strong !
The dove, the tiger, in thy changeful mood :
For while the larks sing, and the linnets brood,
Lo, sullen storm-clouds sweep the smiling dome,
And roar of winds, and the mad tempest-wrath
Beat on the blossomed plain, the forest-path,
And the vast ocean smite to seething foam !

AT SET OF SUN.

ALONG yon purple rim of hills,
How bright the sunset glory lies !
Its radiance spans the western skies,
And all the slumbrous valley fills.

Broad shafts of lucid crimson, blent
With lustrous pearl in massëd white,
And one great spear of amber light
That flames o'er half the firmament.

Vague, murmurous sounds the breezes bear ;
A thousand subtle breaths of balm,
Blown shoreward from the isles of calm,
Float in upon the trancëd air.

And, muffling all its giant roar,
The restless waste of waters, rolled
To one broad sea of liquid gold,
Moves singing up the shining shore !

"HOW BRIGHT THE SUNSET GLORY LIES!" (Page 26.)



TO-MORROW IS TOO FAR AWAY.

To-MORROW is too far away !
A bed of spice the garden is,
Nor bud nor blossom that we miss ;
The roses tremble on the stem,
The violets and anemones :
Why should we wait to gather them ?
Their bloom and balm are ours to-day,
To-morrow — who can say ?

To-morrow is too far away.
Why should we slight the joy complete,
The flower open at our feet ?
For us to-day the robin sings,
His curvèd flight the swallow wings,
For us the happy moments stay.
Stay yet, nor leave us all too fleet !
For life is sweet, and youth is sweet,
And love — ah, love is sweet to-day,
To-morrow — who can say ?

JUST FOR A DAY.

JUST for a day to put my sorrow by !
Forget that summer dies, that roses die,
 And the swift swallow, circling round the eaves,
Leaves us with falling leaves.

Forget the sky shall lose its gold ; the sea
Grow white in tempests ; and the long nights be
 Forlorn of stars, and dreary with the rains
Beating against the panes.

Forget that change is, and that sorrow is,
That souls grow tired, and sweetest memories
 In time turn bitter, and the one sure friend
Is death, that makes an end.

Just for a day to put aside the years,
Washed clean of wrongs, of sins, of heavy tears,
 And dream that life is fair, and love a truth,
And youth is always youth.

That if the swallow goes, 't is for a day,
To come again at dawn with merrier lay,
 Learned in the old fair lands, and the rose brings
New splendors with new springs.

That God is near, and heaven near, and death
So far the young heart scarcely reckoneth
 The time by years and years, as now by days—
 And the whole earth is praise.

And faith is as a spotless dove, with wings
Unclogged with doubt, with many questionings
 Unanswered; and the heart not yet doth tire
 Of its own vain desire.

Just for a day to put all sad things by,
Forget that dreams are dead, that dreams must die—
 Joy is a breath, and hope a star that sets:
 Forget, as love forgets!

THE MARIPOSA LILY.

INSECT or blossom? Fragile, fairy thing,
Poised upon slender tip, and quivering
 To flight! a flower of the fields of air;
 A jeweled moth; a butterfly, with rare
And tender tints upon his downy wing
 A moment resting in our happy sight;
 A flower held captive by a thread so slight
Its petal-wings of broidered gossamer
Are, light as the wind, with every wind astir,—
 Wafting sweet odor, faint and exquisite.
O dainty nursling of the field and sky,
 What fairer thing looks up to heaven's blue
 And drinks the noontide sun, the dawning's dew?
Thou wingèd bloom! thou blossom-butterfly!

LOVE IN LITTLE.

BECAUSE the rose the bloom of blossoms is,
And queenliest in beauty and in grace,
The violet's tender blue we love no less,
Or daisy, glancing up with shy, sweet face.

For all the music which the forest has,
The ocean waves that crash upon the beach,
Still would we miss the whisper of the grass,
The hum of bees, the brooklet's silver speech.

We would not have the timid wood-thrush mute
Because the bul bul more divinely sings,
Nor lose the scarlet of dear robin's throat,
For all the tropics' flash of golden wings.

So do I think, though weak we be, and small,
Yet is there One whose care is none the less :
Who finds, perchance, some grain of worth in all,
Or loves us for our very humbleness !

NO MORE.

NAY, then, what can be done
When love is flown,
 When love has passed away?
 Sit in the twilight gray,
Thinking how near he was,
Thinking how dear he was,
 That is no more, to-day !

How can the day be fair
Love may not share ?
 How day go by,
Hearing no fond words said,
With no dear kisses shed —
O, how can love be dead,
 And yet not I !

WHILE LILIES BUD AND BLOW.

WHILE lilies bud and blow,
While roses grow,
And trees wave greenly in the sun,
Wave greenly to and fro ;
And ring-doves coo and coo,
And skies drop dew,
And th' throstle pipes above the nest
His wee mate broods upon,
How can one choose but sing
Of joy, love — everything !

While the north wind sobs and grieves,
While the trees drop leaves,
And scentless, budless meadows lie
Bare to the beating rain ;
And the birds are grown and flown,
And the nests are lone,
And love, like closing day,
Grows cold, grows old and gray —
How can one help but sigh,
While night draws nigh,
And darkly runs the river to the main !

A little plot where showers
May bring forth flowers —

Poppies, mandragora, and all sweet balm !

Ah me ! who can but smile ?

Only a little while,

And hearts forget to ache,

And eyes to wake ;

The grass clasps softly velvet palm with palm

Above the quiet breast,

And hope, and God's white angels, know the rest !

HOW LOOKED THE EARTH ?

How looked the earth unto His eyes,
So lately closed on Paradise ?

Clad all in purity
Of snowy raiment, as a bride
That waiteth for her lord to see —
That waiteth in her love and pride ?

Was the snow white on fields and rocks,
Whereon the shepherds watched their flocks

In the midwinter night ?

And saw the angel, clothed in white,
The heavenly gates that opened wide,

In midst whereof was One

They dared not gaze upon !

Snow hither, thither, and afar,
Beneath the new, mysterious star ?

Snow upon Lebanon,

Whose cedars stood, a crystal net
Of frost-work, beautiful to see ?

Snow upon Olivet —

Snow upon awful Calvary ?

Found He it fair to look upon,
Beneath the wooing of the sun ?

The turf whereon He trod,

Did He not bend his glance to greet?
The daisy glancing from the sod,
 The lily slim and tall;
The ferny banks of sheltered nooks,
The singing voice within the brooks,
 Each slender blade of grass that sprang,
The tender shade of leafy ways,
Each little bird that sang
 Its wee heart out in praise—
I think He found them sweet,
He knew and loved them all.

WITHHELD.

THEREIN is sunlight, and sweet sound :

Cool flow of waters, musical,
Soft stir of insect-wings, and fall
Of blossom-snow upon the ground.

The birds flit in and out the trees,
Their bright, sweet throats strained full with song.
The flower-beds, the summer long,
Are black and murmurous with bees.

Th' unrippled leaves hang faint with dew
In hushes of the breezeless morn.
At eventide the stars, new born,
And the white moonlight, glimmer through.

Therein are all glad things whereof
Life holdeth need through changing years ;
Therein sweet rest, sweet end of tears,
Therein sweet labors, born of love.

This is my heritage, mine own,
That alien hands from me withhold.
From barrèd windows, dark and cold,
I view, with heart that maketh moan.

They fetter feet and hands ; they give
Me bitter, thankless tasks to do ;
And, cruel wise, still feed anew
My one small hope, that I may live.

And, that no single pang I miss,
Lo ! this one little window-space
Is left, where through my eyes may trace
How sweeter than all sweet it is.

IN TIME OF FALLING LEAVES.

THE summer rose is dead ;
The sad leaves, witheréd,
Strew ankle-deep the pathways to our tread :
Dry grasses mat the plain,
And drifts of blossom slain ;
And day and night the wind is like a pain.

No nightingale to sing
In green boughs listening,
Through balmy twilight hushes of the spring :
No thrush, no oriole
In music to outroll
The little golden raptures of his soul.

O royal summer reign !
When will you come again,
Bringing the happy birds across the main !
O blossoms ! when renew
Your pretty garbs, and woo
Your waiting, wild bee lovers back to you ?

For lo, my heart is numb ;
For lo, my heart is dumb,
Is silent till the birds and blossoms come !
A flower, that lieth cold

Under the wintry mould,
Waiting the warm spring-breathing to unfold.

O swallow! all too slow
Over the waves you go,
Dipping your light wings in their sparkling flow.
Over the golden sea,
O swallow, flying free,
Fly swiftly with the summer back to me!

I CANNOT COUNT MY LIFE A LOSS.

I CANNOT count my life a loss,
With all its length of evil days.
I hold them only as the dross
About its gold, whose worth outweighs :
For each and all I give Him praise.

For, drawing nearer to the brink
That leadeth down to final rest,
I see with clearer eyes, I think,
And much that vexed me and oppressed,
Have learned was right, and just, and best.

So though I may but dimly guess
Its far intent, this gift of His
I honor ; nor would know the less
One sorrow, or in pain or bliss
Have other than it was and is.

NOT YET.

Not yet from the yellow west,
 Fade, light of the autumn day :
Far lies my haven of rest,
 And rough the way.
She has waited long, my own !
And the night is dark and drear
 To meet alone.

Not yet, with the leaves that fall,
 Fall, rose of the wayside thorn,
Fair and most sweet of all
 The summer-born.
But O for my rose that stands,
And waits, through the lessening year,
 My gathering hands !

Fail not, O my life, so fast —
 Fail not till we shall have met:
Soon, soon will thy pulse be past,
 But oh, not yet ! —
Till her fond eyes on me shine,
And the heart so dear, so dear,
 Beats close to mine.

IF ONLY.

If only in my dreams I once might see
Thy face ! though thou shouldst stand
With cold, unreaching hand,
Nor vex thy lips to break
The silence, with a word for my love's sake ;
Nor turn to mine thine eyes,
Serene with the long peace of Paradise,
Yet, henceforth, life would be
Made sweet, not wholly bitter unto me.

If only I might know for verity,
That when the light is done
Of this world's sun,
And that unknown, long-sealed
To sound and sight, is suddenly revealed,
That thine should be the first dear voice thereof,
And thy dear face the first — O love, my love !
Then coming death would be
Sweet, ah, most sweet, not bitter unto me !

IN THE GRAND CAÑON.

THE strongholds these of those strange, mighty gods
Who walked the earth before man's feeble race,
And, passing hence to their unknown abodes
In farther worlds, left here their awful trace.
Turrets, and battlements, and toppling towers,
That spurn the torrent foaming at their base,
And pierce the clouds, uplifting into space.
No sound is here, save where the river pours
Its ice-born flood, or when the tempests sweep
In rush of battle, and the lightnings leap
In thunder to the cliffs ; no wing outspread
Above these walls, lone and untenanted
By man or beast, — but where the eagle soars
Above the crags, — and by the gates they guard,
Huge, and as motionless, on either hand,
The rock-hewn sentinels in silence stand,
Through the long centuries keeping watch and ward.
Up from the sheer abysses that we tread,
Wherein pale shadow holds her mystic sway,
And night yields never wholly to the day,
To where, in narrowing light far overhead,
Arch capping arch and peak to peak is wed,
We gaze, and veil our eyes in silent awe,
As when Jehovah's form the prophet saw.

A SONG OF THE SUMMER WIND.

BALMILY, balmily, summer wind,
Sigh through the mountain passes ;
Over the sleep of the beautiful deep,
Over the woods' green masses,
Ripple the grain of valley and plain,
And the reeds and the river grasses.

How many songs, O summer wind,
How many songs you know
Of fair, sweet things in your wanderings,
As over the earth you go,
To the Norland bare and bleak, from where
The red south roses blow.

Where the red south blossoms blow, O wind,
(Sing low to me, low and stillly !)
And the golden green of the citrons lean
To the white of the saintly lily ;
Where the sun-rays drowse in the orange boughs,
(Sing, sing, for the heart grows chilly !)
And the belted bee hangs heavily
In rose and daffodilly.

I know a song, O summer wind,
A song of a willow-tree :

Soft as the sweep of its fringes deep
In languorous swoons of tropic noons,
 But sad as sad can be !
Yet I would you might sing it, summer wind,
 I would you might sing it me.

(O tremulous, musical murmur of leaves,
 O mystical melancholy
Of waves, that call from the far sea-wall, —
 Shall I render your meaning wholly,
Ere the day shall wane to the night again,
 And the stars come, slowly, slowly ?)

I would you might sing me, summer wind,
 A song of a little chamber :
Sing soft, sing low, how the roses grow,
 And the starry jasmines clamber,
Through the emerald rifts how the moonlight drifts,
 And the sunlight's mellow amber.

Sing of a hand in the fluttering leaves,
 Like a wee white bird in its nest :
Of a white hand twined in the leaves to find
 A bloom for the fair young breast ;
Sing of my love, my little love,
 My snow-white dove in her nest,
As she looks through the fragrant jasmine leaves
 Into the wasting west.

Tenderly, tenderly, summer wind,
 With murmurous word caresses,

O wind of the south, to her beautiful mouth
Did you cling with your balmy kisses ?
Flutter and float o'er the white, white throat,
And ripple the golden tresses ?

“ *The long year groweth from green to gold,*”
Saith the song of the willow-tree :
“ *My tresses cover, my roots enfold,*”
O summer wind, sing it me !
Lorn and dreary, sad and weary,
As lovers that parted be —
But sweet as the grace of a fair young face
I never again may see !

A FANCY.

I THINK I would not be
A stately tree,
Broad-boughed, with haughty crest that seeks the sky;
Too many sorrows lie
In years, too much of bitter for the sweet:
Frost-bite, and blast, and heat,
Blind drought, cold rains, must all grow wearisome,
Ere one could put away
Their leafy garb for aye,
And let death come.

Rather this wayside flower!
To live its happy hour
Of balmy air, of sunshine, and of dew.
A sinless face held upward to the blue;
A bird-song sung to it,
A butterfly to flit
On dazzling wings above it, hither, thither—
A sweet surprise of life — and then exhale
A little fragrant soul on the soft gale,
To float — ah ! whither ?

CUPID KISSED ME.

LOVE and I, one summer day,
Took a walk together ;
O how beautiful the way
Through the blooming heather !
Far-off bells rang matin-chimes,
Birds sang, silver-voicing,
And our happy hearts beat time
To the earth's rejoicing.
Well-a-day ! ah, well-a-day !
Then pale grief had missed me,
And mirth and I kept company
Ere Cupid kissed me.

Love ran idly where he would,
Child-like, all unheeding ;
I as carelessly pursued
The pathway he was leading :
Till upon the shadowed side
Of a cool, swift river,
Where the sunbeams smote the tide,
Goldenly a-quiver —
Well-a-day ! ah, well-a-day !
“ Love,” I cried, “ come rest thee.”
Ah, but heart and I were gay
Ere Cupid kissed me !

Shadows of a summer cloud
Fell on near and far land ;
Fragrantly the branches bowed
Every leafy garland ;
While with shining head at rest,
Next my heart reclining,
Love's white arms, with soft caress,
Round my neck were twining.
Well-a-day ! ah, well-a-day !
Love, who can resist thee ?
On the river banks that day
Cupid kissed me.

Woe is me ! in cheerless plight,
By the cold, sad river,
Seek I Love, who, taken flight,
Comes no more forever :
Love from whom more pain than bliss
Every heart obtaineth,
For the joy soon vanished is
While the pang remaineth.
Well-a-day ! ah, well-a-day !
Would, Love, I had missed thee :
Peace and I are twain for aye,
Since Cupid kissed me.

RESPITE.

SING, lark, far up the sky !
Sing, throstle, for love's sake !
Sing, sing, as if no heart might ever break !

Softly, O summer sigh
Of winds, let patter down
The blossom-rain, as if no storms had blown !

Smile, flowers, along the way,—
Your dainty presence stirs
Such blessëd thoughts, ye little comforters.

O earth, for one kind day
Let me be glad again,—
Forgetting grief that is, and that has been.

THE SEA-SHELL.

“AND love will stay, a summer’s day !”

A long wave rippled up the strand,
She flashed a white hand through the spray
And plucked a sea-shell from the sand ;
And laughed — “ O doubting heart, have peace !
When faith of mine shall fail to thee
This fond, remembering shell will cease
To sing its love, the sea.”

Ah, well ! sweet summer’s past and gone, —

And love, perchance, shuns wintry weather, —
And so the pretty dears are flown
On lightsome, careless wings together.
I smile : this little pearly-lined,
Pink-veinëd shell she gave to me,
With foolish, faithful lips to find
Still sing its love, the sea.

SUMMER PAST.

Now the summer all is over !
We have wandered through the clover,
 We have plucked in wood and lea
Blue-bell and anemone.

We were children of the sun,
Very brown to look upon ;
 We were stainéd, hands and lips,
With the berries' juicy tips.

And I think that we may know
Where the rankest nettles grow,
 And where oak and ivy weave
Crimson glories to deceive.

Now the merry days are over !
Woodland tenants seek their cover,
 And the swallow leaves again
For his castle-nests in Spain.

Shut the door, and close the blind :
We shall have the bitter wind,
 We shall have the dreary rain
Striving, driving at the pane.

Send the ruddy fire-light higher,
Draw your easy-chair up nigher,
Through the winter, bleak and chill,
We may have our summer still.

Here are poems we may read,
Pleasant fancies to our need ;
Ah, eternal summer-time,
Dwells within the poet's rhyme !

All the birds' sweet melodies
Linger in these songs of his,
And the blossoms of all ages
Waft their fragrance from his pages.

LEAF AND BLADE.

I AM a lowly grass-blade,
A fair green leaf is she,
Her little fluttering shadow
Falls daily over me.

She sits so high in sunshine,
I am so low in shade,
I do not think she ever
Has looked where I am laid.

She sings to merry music,
She frolics in the light;
The great moon plays the lover
With her through half the night.

The swift, sweet winds they flatter
And woo her all the day,—
I tremble lest the boldest
Should carry her away.

Only a little grass-blade,
That dare not look so high,
Yet, oh ! not any love her
One half so well as I.

My little love — so happy !
My love — so proud and fair !
Would she might dwell forever
In the sweet summer air.

But, ah ! the days will darken,
The pleasant skies will pall,
And pale, and parched, and broken,
My little love down fall.

And yet the thought most bitter
Is not that she must die,
But that even death should bring her
To lie as low as I.

THE CAPTIVE OF THE WHITE CITY.¹

FLOWER of the foam of the waves
 Of the beautiful inland sea, —
White as the foam that laves
 The ships of the Sea-Kings past, —
 Marvel of human hands,
Wonderful, mystical, vast,
 The great White City stands ;
And the banners of all the lands
 Are free on the western breeze,
 Free as the West is free.
And the throngs go up and down
 In the streets of the wonderful town
 In brotherly love and grace, —
Children of every zone
 The light of the sun has known :
 And there in the Midway Place,
 In the House of the Unhewn Trees,

¹ In the Midway Plaisance of the World's Fair in Chicago, in 1893, there was, by permission of the United States Government (so read the record), under guard in the log cabin owned by Sitting Bull, and in which that chief and his son were killed, the Sioux Indian immortalized by the verse of Longfellow, and whose name will go down in history as the slayer of General George A. Custer, in the fight on the Little Big Horn.

There in the surging crowd,
 Silent, and stern, and proud,
 Sits Rain-in-the-Face !

Why is the captive here ?
 Is the hour of the Lord so near
 When slayer and slain shall meet
 In the place of the Judgment seat
 For the word of the last decree ?
 Ah, what is that word to be ?
 For the beautiful City stands ¹
 On the Red Man's wrested lands,
 The home of a fated race ;
 And a ghostly shadow falls
 Over the trophied ² walls
 Of the House of the Unhewn Tree,
 In the pleasant Midway Place.
 There is blood on the broken door,
 There is blood on the broken floor,
 Blood on your bronzëd hands,
 O Rain-in-the-Face !

Shut from the sunlit air,
 Like a sun-god overthrown,
 The soldier, Custer, lies.
 Dust is the sun-kissed hair,
 Dust are the dauntless eyes,
 Dust and a name alone ; —

¹ The Indians claim that the land upon which Chicago is built was never fully paid for.

² The walls were hung with relics of the fight.

While the wife holds watch with grief
For the never-returning chief.
What if she walked to-day
In the City's pleasant way,
The beautiful Midway Place,
And there to her sudden gaze,
Dimmed with her widow's tears,
After the terrible years,
Stood Rain-in-the-Face !

Quench with a drop of dew
From the morning's cloudless blue
The prairies' burning plains —
The seas of seething flame ;
Turn from its awful path
The tempest, in its wrath ;
Lure from his jungle-lair
The tiger, crouching there
For the leap on his sighted prey :
Then seek as well to tame
The hate in the Red Man's veins,
His tiger-thirst to cool,
In the hour of the evil day
When his foe before him stands !
From the wrongs of the White Man's rule
Blood only may wash the trace.
Alas, for the death-heaped plain !
Alas, for slayer and slain !
Alas for your blood-stained hands,
O Rain-in-the-Face !

And the throngs go up, go down,
In the streets of the wonderful town ;
And jests of the merry tongue,
And the dance, and the glad songs sung,
 Ring through the sunlit space.
And there, in the wild, free breeze,
In the House of the Unhewn Trees,
 In the beautiful Midway Place,
The captive sits apart,
Silent, and makes no sign.
 But what is the word in your heart,
O man of a dying race ?
 What tale on your lips for mine,
O Rain-in-the-Face ?

WITH A WREATH OF LAUREL.

O WINDS, that ripple the long grass !

O winds, that kiss the jeweled sea !

Grow still and lingering as you pass

About this laurel-tree.

Great Shasta knew you in the cloud

That turbans his white brow ; the sweet,

Cool rivers ; and the woods that bowed

Before your pinions fleet.

With meadow scents your breath is rife ;

With redwood odors, and with pine :

Now pause and thrill with twofold life

Each spicy leaf I twine.

The laurel grows upon the hill

That looks across the western sea.

O wind, within the boughs be still,

O sun, shine tenderly,

And bird, sing soft about your nest :

I twine a wreath for other lands, —

A grave ! nor wife nor child has blest

With touch of loving hands.

Where eyes are closed, divine and young,
Dusked in a night no morn may break,
And hushed the poet lips that sung,
The songs none else may wake :

Unfelt the venom'd arrow-thrust,
Unheard the lips that hiss disgrace,
While the sad heart is dust, and dust
The beautiful, sad face !

For him I pluck the laurel crown !
It ripened in the western breeze,
Where Saucelito's hills look down
Upon the golden seas ;

And sunlight lingered in its leaves
From dawn until the scarce dimmed sky
Changed to the light of stars ; and waves
Sang to it constantly.

I weave, and strive to weave a tone,
A touch, that, somehow, when it lies
Upon his sacred dust, alone,
Beneath the English skies,

The sunshine of the arch it knew,
The calm that wrapt its native hill,
The love that wreathed its glossy hue,
May breathe around it still !

LOVE-SONG.

A BIRD flies over the sea, —
Over the golden sea,
With a message from me to thee,
 O my belovëd !

Swift to thy lattice bar,
 My life, my belovëd,
Under the morning-star
He shall rest where my soul-thoughts are,
 O my belovëd !

He shall 'light in the viny rings ;
At thy window fastenings
He shall beat with his eager wings,
 O my belovëd !

And ah ! for the wild, sweet note,
 My dove, my belovëd ;
And O for the mad, sweet note
That shall float from his honeyed throat,
 O love, my belovëd !

THE YEARS.

WHAT do I owe the years, that I should bring
 Green leaves to crown them king ?
Blown, barren sands, the thistle, and the brier,
 Dead hope, and mocked desire,
And sorrow, vast and pitiless as the sea :
 These are their gifts to me.

What do I owe the years, that I should love
 And sing the praise thereof ?
Perhaps, the lark's clear carol wakes with morn,
 And winds amid the corn
Clash fairy cymbals ; but I miss the joys,
 Missing the tender voice —
Sweet as a throstle's after April rain —
 That may not sing again.

What do I owe the years, that I should greet
 Their bitter, and not sweet,
With wine, and wit, and laughter ? Rather thrust
 The wine-cup to the dust !
What have they brought to me, these many years ?
 Silence and bitter tears.

FROM LIVING WATERS.

*“ Into the balm of the clover,
 Into the dawn and the dew,
Come, O my poet, my lover,
 Single of spirit and true !*

*“ Sweeter the song of the throstle
 Shall ring from its nest in the vine,
And the lark, my belovèd apostle,
 Shall chant thee a gospel divine.*

*“ Ah ! not to the dullard, the schemer,
 I of my fullness may give,
But thou, whom the world calleth dreamer,
 Drink of my fountains and live !”*

Oh, and golden in the sun did the river waters run,
Oh, and golden in its shining all the mellow landscape
 lay,
And the poet's simple rhyme blended softly with the
 chime
Of the bells that rang the noontide, in the city, far
 away.

And the gold and amethyst of the thin, transparent mist
Lifted, drifted from the ocean to the far horizon's rim,

Where the white, transfigured ghost of some vessel,
 long since lost,
 Half in cloud and half in billow, trembled on its utmost
 brim.

And I said : “ Most beautiful, in thy noontide dream
 and lull,
 Art thou, Nature, sweetest mother, in thy summer rai-
 ment drest,—
 Aye, in all thy moods and phases, lovingly I name
 thy praises,
 Yet through all my love and longing chafeth still the
 old unrest.”

*“ Art thou a-worn and a-weary,
 Sick with the doubts that perplex ?
 Come from thy wisdom most dreary,
 Less fair than the faith which it wrecks.*

*“ Not in the tomes of the sages
 Lieth the word to thy need ;
 Truer my blossomy pages,
 Sweeter their lessons to read.”*

“ Ay,” I said, “ but con it duly, who may read the
 lesson truly,
 Who may grasp the mighty meaning, hidden past
 our finding out ?
 From the weary search unsleeping, what is yielded to
 our keeping ?
 All our knowledge, peradventure ; all our wisdom,
 merely doubt !

"O my Earth, to know thee fully ! I who love thee,
 singly, wholly !

In thy beauty thou art veiled ; in thy melody art
 dumb.

Once, unto my perfect seeing yield this mystery of
 being, —

Once, thy silence breaking, tell me, whither go we ?
 whence we come ? "

And I heard the rustling leaves, and the sheaves against
 the sheaves

Clashing lightly, clashing brightly, as they ripened in
 the sun ;

And the gracious air astir with the insect hum and
 whirr,

And the merry splash and ripple where the river waters
 run ;

Heard the anthem of the sea — that most mighty
 melody —

Only these : yet something deeper than to own my
 spirit willed.

Like a holy calm descending, with my inmost being
 blending —

Like the " Peace " to troubled waters, that are pacified
 and stilled.

And I said : " Ah, what are we ? Children at the
 Master's knee —

Little greater than these grasses glancing upward from
 the sods !

Just the few first pages turning in His mighty book of learning —

We, mere atoms of beginning, that would wrestle with the gods ! ”

*“ In the least one of my daisies
Deeper a meaning is set,
Than the seers ye crown with your praises,
Have wrung from the centuries yet.*

*“ Leave them their doubt and derision :
Lo, to the knowledge I bring,
Clingeth no dimness of vision !
Come, O my chosen, my king !*

*“ Out from the clouds that cover,
The night that would blind and betray,
Come, O my singer, my lover,
Into the golden day ! ”*

Oh, and deeper through the calm rolled the ceaseless ocean psalm,

Oh, and brighter in the sunshine all the meadows stretched away ;

And a little lark sang clear from the willow branches near,

And the glory and the gladness closed about me where I lay.

And I said : “ Ay, verily, waiteth yet the master key,

All these mysteries that shall open, though to surer
hand than mine ;
All these doubts of our discerning, to the peace of
knowledge turning,
All our darkness, which is human, to the light, which
is divine ! ”

SAILED.

O SHINING, sapphire sea !
From thy bosom put away
Every vexing thought to-day ;
Smile through all thy dimpling spray :
 All that earth contains for me,
 Of love, and truth, and purity,
 Trust I unto thee !

O foam-flecked, azure sea !
Let thy calm, untroubled waves,
 By the softest gales caressed,
Rise and fall like love-beats in
 Her timid maiden breast ;
Let thy dreamiest melodies
 Cradle her to rest.

O wild, white, mystic sea !
Let thy strong upholding arm
 Tender as a lover's be ;
Let no breath of rude alarm
 Mar her heart's tranquillity ;
Through the sunshine, past the storm,
 Bear her safe from every harm,
Once again to me !

AT THE DAWN.

(SONG.)

AWAKE, beloved ! my heart awakes,—
Though still in slumber lies
The world ; the pearl of morning breaks
Along the eastern skies.
The moon, the stars, that rule the night,
And look on land and sea,
A pathway are of luring light
My spirit walks to thee.

'Wake! ere between again shall lift
The day his lance of flame ;
From the still shores of dreamland drift
One hour to love's dear claim.
O love ! my love ! the shadows part,—
Thine eager arms I see,—
“As for the water-brook the hart,”
So is my soul for thee !

OWNERSHIP.

IN a garden that I know,
Only palest blossoms blow.

There the lily, purest nun,
Hides her white face from the sun,

And the maiden rose-bud stirs
In a garment fair as hers.

One shy bird, with folded wings
Sits within the leaves and sings ;

Sits and sings the daylight long,
Just a patient, plaintive song.

Other gardens greet the spring
With a blaze of blossoming ;

Other song-birds, piping clear,
Chorus from the branches near ;

But my blossoms, palest known,
Bloom for me and me alone,

And my bird, though sad and lonely,
Sings for me, and for me only.

IN THE POUTS.

CHEEKS of an ominous crimson,
Eyebrows arched to a frown,
Pretty red lips a-quiver
With holding their sweetness down, —

Glance that is never lifted
From the hands that, in cruel play,
Are tearing the white-rose petals,
And tossing their hearts away.

Only to think that a whisper,
An idle, meaningless jest,
Should stir such a world of passion
In a dear, little, loving breast !

Yet ever for such light trifles
Will lover and lass fall out,
And the humblest lad grow haughty,
And the gentlest maiden pout.

Of course, I must sue for pardon,
For what I can hardly say —
But, deaf to opposing reason,
A woman will have her way ;

And when in despite of frowning,
The scorn, the grief, and the rue,
She looks so bewitchingly pretty,
Why, what can a fellow do?

TWO PICTURES.

MORNING.

As in a quiet dream,
The mighty waters seem ;
Scarcely a ripple shows
Upon their blue repose.

The sea-gulls smoothly ride
Upon the drowsy tide,
And a white sail doth sleep
Far out upon the deep.

A dreamy purple fills
The hollows of the hills ;
A single cloud floats through
The sky's serenest blue ;

And far beyond the Gate,
The massëd vapors wait,
White as the walls that ring
The City of the King.

There is no sound, no word,
Only a happy bird

Trills to her nestling young,
A little sleepy song.

This is the holy calm ;
The heavens dropping balm ;
The Love made manifest,
And near ; the perfect rest.

EVENING.

The day grows wan and cold ;
In through the Gate of Gold
The restless vapors glide,
Like ghosts upon the tide.

The brown bird folds her wing,
Sad, with no song to sing.
Along the streets the dust
Blows sharp with sudden gust.

The night comes, chill and gray ;
Over the sullen bay,
What mournful echoes pass
From lonely Alcatraz !

O bell, with solemn toll,
As for a passing soul, —
As for a soul that waits,
In vain, at heaven's gates !

This is the utter blight;
The sorrow infinite
Of earth; the closing wave,
The parting, and the grave.

AT REST.

(B. P. A.)

GOD rest thy soul !
O kind and pure,
Tender of heart, yet strong to wield control,
And to endure !

Close the clear eyes :
No greater woe
Earth's patient heart, than when a good man dies,
Can ever know.

With us is night,
Toil without rest, —
But where thy gentle spirit walks in light,
The ways are blest.

God's peace be thine !
God's perfect peace !
Thy meed of faithful service, until time
And death shall cease.

LONELINESS.

THE waning moon was up,— the stars
Were faint, and very few ;
The vines about the window-sill
Were wet with falling dew ;

A little cloud before the wind
Was drifting down the west ;
I heard the moaning of the sea
In its unquiet rest ;

Until, I know not from what grief,
Or thought of other years,
The hand I leaned upon was cold
And wet with falling tears.

BESIDE THE DEAD.

It must be sweet, O thou, my dead, to lie
With hands that folded are from every task ;
Sealed with the seal of the great mystery,
The lips that nothing answer, nothing ask.
The life-long struggle ended ; ended quite
The weariness of patience, and of pain,
And the eyes closed to open not again
On desolate dawn or dreariness of night.
It must be sweet to slumber and forget ;
To have the poor tired heart so still at last :
Done with all yearning, done with all regret,
Doubt, fear, hope, sorrow, all forever past :
Past all the hours, or slow of wing or fleet —
It must be sweet, it must be very sweet !

THE ROAD TO SCHOOL.

A MEADOW greenly carpeted ;
A strip of woodland, brown and cool,
Through which the wandering pathway led
Unto the village school :

The little pathway he and I,
Across the happy summer-land,
In happy summer-times gone by,
Trod, daily, hand in hand.

The mountain stream, far off, that drew
Its glittering length across the farm,
Reached softly down the vale, and threw
The path one cool, white arm ;

And careless as the truant tide
That flashed its crystal in the sun,
Or slipped along the woodland side,
Our wayward feet would run.

Through tangled ferns, up furzy slopes,
Where the broad forest shadows fell,
Through golden seas of buttercups,
Wind-rippled, down the dell ;

We plashed the foamy water-brink,
We followed on the rabbit's track,
And rang the merry bobolink
His saucy challenge back.

How tenderly, from stone to stone,
Where the deep stream ran swift and clear,
He led my timid footsteps on —
My gay, young cavalier !

He knew each haunt of bird and bee ;
The secret of each nestling brood ;
He mimicked every melody
That thrilled the listening wood ;

With many a carved and quaint design,
Would fashion acorns into beads,
Chains of the needles of the pine,
And whistles out of reeds.

Ah ! many a time the brave voice spake,
An earnest pleader in my cause,
The tanned, round hand went out to take
Dire strokes for broken laws ;

And many a prompting, timely said,
The master's dreaded anger turned
From the small, idle, flaxen head
Whose tasks were yet unlearned.

What quaint, sweet summer gifts he brought !

A white pond-lily, filled to th' brim
With scarlet berries ; buds, half shut ;
Gold fruits on leaf and limb ;

Some wide-blown flower with tawny dyes ;
A butterfly with jeweled wing,
Or captive bird, with frightened eyes
And wee heart, fluttering.

Dear playmate ! in those golden ways
Your heart found rest, my heart endures ;
But, through the weary days and days,
Life gives no love like yours.

Life gives no faith ! Ah, child-mate dear,
When the appointed years shall fall
From off me, as a cloud, and near
And clear I hear the call —

And the new way is strange to me,
Reach thou, and lead me, hand in hand,
As down the path of old, till we
Before the Master stand :

There yet once more thy brave voice raise,
O playmate ! in thy truant's cause,
For tasks unlearned, for wasted days,
For all His broken laws.

Siesta.

If I lie at ease in the cradling trees,
Till the day drops down in the golden seas,
Till the light shall die from the warm, wide sky,
And the cool night cover me — what care I ?

All as one when the day is done,
The woven woof or the web unspun :
In my leafy nest I will lie at rest,
A careless dreamer, and that is best.

Does a brown eye wake for a trouble's sake,
Ye little tenants of wood and brake ?
What deeper woe does a wild-bee know
Than to vex the heart of a honey-blow ?

Bonny birds, sing to me, butterflies, wing to me,
Slender convolvulus, flutter and cling to me ;
Dim spice-odors and meadow-musk
Blow about me from dawn to dusk !

Though the city frown from her hill-tops brown,
And the weary toilers go up and down,
I will lie at rest in my leafy nest,
A careless dreamer, and that is best.

THE DAY OF OUR LORD.

THE chime of many bells upon the air
Calling to halls of prayer,
And, from the street,
A child's laugh, shrill and sweet,
Break in upon my silence, and the thought
The day has brought.

Christ's Day ! The sacred morn
Whereon, long centuries past, the Lord was born.
With the deep-toning bells,
The organs' sinks and swells,
The churches' pageantry,
The song, the feasting and festivity —
How many think of Thee ?
Of Thee, and this Thy day,
And all the solemn story which it tells ?

Do I? I look within
On mine own sin ;
I do not need to gaze without, to find
The mote that makes another's vision blind,
Or seek along strange ways
For burdens that make weary all the days.
I know Whose willing breast
Would bear my load ;

I know Whose clasp, most blest,
Would lead the feet that stumble on the road ;
I know His sure abode,—
And hear, unceasingly,
The call, “Come unto me,
And I will give you rest !”

We know . . . and answer not !
The fiercest fights are fought,
Not between nations, nor 'twixt race and race,
But in the human soul's still, secret space.
The pride that yields not unto foe or friend ;
The stubborn will that breaks not, nor will bend ;
The vengeful thought where falsehood's cruel
wrong
And serpent-fanged ingratitude have stung ;
The base ambition that would self exalt
Upon another's effort ; envy, strife,
The cowardice that dares not own the fault ;
The vampire, hate, that drains the veins of
life, —
Of these the forces which the soul engage
To hold it from its holy heritage :
Of these the foes, whose multitudes appall,
That it must meet, to fell them or to fall.

How hard it seems ! How simple it all is !
And oh, the priceless worth !
It reckons not of worldly power or pelf,
Nor of earth-praise the meed.
The all in all in this

His simple creed :

“ Love thou thy God ; thy neighbor as thyself ;
Forgive, as thou dost hope to be forgiven ! ”

And lo ! we have sweet Heaven

About us on the earth.

It is Thy day, dear Lord,

Help me remember it.

Help me to live Thy word,

So living, honor it.

Help me to thrust away

My cruel foes, to-day,

Forever and for aye.

It is Thy day, dear Lord,

It is Thy Day !

WHO KNOWETH ?

WHO knoweth the hope that was born to me,
When the spring-time came with its greenery ?
With orchard blossoming, fair to see,
With drone of beetle, and buzz of bee,
And robin a-trill on his apple-tree,
 Cheerily, cheerily !

Who knoweth the hope that was dead — ah, me !
That was dead — and never again to be ?
When the winter came, all dismally,
With desolate rain on desolate sea ;
With cold snow-blossoms for wood and lea,
And the wind a-moan in the apple-tree,
 Drearly, drearily !

A NEW LEAF.

HERE 's the volume : stain nor blot
Mars a leaf to-day ;
Sin and folly, they are not ;
Sorrow is away.

Look ! each page is white and clear,
And 't is morning of the year.

Of the days that swiftly run
This will not be mute :
Good or evil said or done,
Sweet or bitter fruit,
What shall be the record, dear,
At the evening of the year ?

“UNTO THE DAY.”

SHALL we count the reeds at our feet,
Or the fluttering, falling leaves?
Or number the golden sheaves
 Of the ripening wheat?
Reckon the gathered flowers,
 And the moments, all too fleet?
Enough to know them ours,
 To know them sweet!

Because that a cloud may lie
Over the morrow's sky,
 Must we miss
The glory that shines from this?

This love that is mine to-day,
Will it go, will it stay?
Must I question, must I weigh?
 Nay, love, for thou art blind!
 With wings of the wind,
With speed of the morning fleet,
Or, fluttering to rest,
 White dove to her white nest,
 I know not, nor divine.
Enough to know thee sweet,
 To know thee mine!

UNBOUND.

J. F. B. DIED APRIL 29, 1882.

FORTH from this low estate,
Fetterless now of fate,
 Pass, spirit blest !
Out of the cark and care,
Out of the griefs that were,
 Into thy rest.

Done with the dreary round
Daily thy soul that bound
 From its true aim, —
Little can matter now
Fame's wreath upon the brow,
 Earth-praise or blame.

God ! is there of despair
Keener than this to bear,
 Under the sun :
Tasked, like a slave in chains,
While our true work remains
 Waiting, undone ?

Feeling, as life sweeps by,
All the pure majesty

Of that we miss ?
Fettered and tortured so,
Christ, pity all who know
Sorrow like this !

Not here was given his wage :
Of his best heritage
Barred and denied.
Man of the silver tongue,
Poet of songs unsung,
Dreamer, clear-eyed ;

Slave not to gain or greed ;
Bound by no narrow creed
By priestcraft taught :
In God's fair universe
Seeing nor hate, nor curse
Of Him that wrought ;

Trusting the love divine,—
Careless of church or shrine,
Blessing or ban ;
His prayer the common good,
His faith the brotherhood
Of man with man.

And if unto his eyes
Veiled were the mysteries
Of the far shore,
Who of us all may be
Wiser, in truth, than he ?
Who knoweth more ?

Never the kindly wit
Lighter, because of it,
 Sad hearts shall make ;
No more the earnest thought,
With its deep lesson fraught,
 Souls shall awake.

Eloquent eye and lip,
Peerless companionship,
 Passed from the earth.
Friend of the many years,
Well for thee fall my tears,
 Knowing thy worth.

Flowers on the gentle breast,
Lay the frail form to rest
 Under the sod.
Passed from earth's low estate,
Fetterless now of fate,
 Leave him with God.

“ONE TOUCH OF NATURE.”

A LARK’s song dropped from heaven,
A rose’s breath at noon ;
A still, sweet stream that flows and flows
Beneath a still, sweet moon ;

A little wayside flower
Plucked from the grasses, thus !
A sound, a breath, a glance, — and yet
What is ’t they bring to us ?

For the world grows far too wise,
And wisdom is but grief :
Much thought makes but a weary way,
And question, unbelief.

Thank God for the bird’s song,
And for the flower’s breath !
Thank God for any voice to wake
The old sweet hymn of faith !

For a world grown all too wise
(Or is ’t not wise enough?),
Thank God for anything that makes
The path less dark and rough !

MARAH.

“THE song were sweeter and better
If only the thought were glad.”
Be hidden the chafe of the fetter,
The scars of the wounds you have had ;
Be silent of strife and endeavor,
But shout of the victory won,—
You may sit in the shadow forever,
If only you ’ll sing of the sun.

There are hearts, you must know, over tender
With the wine of the joy-cup of years ;
One might dim for a moment the splendor
Of eyes unaccustomed to tears :
So sing, if you must, with the gladness
That brimmed the lost heart of your youth,
Lest you breathe, in the song and its sadness,
The secret of life at its truth.

O violets, born of the valley,
You are sweet in the sun and the dew,
But your sisters, in yonder dim alley,
Are sweeter — and paler — than you !
O birds, you are blithe in the meadow,
But your mates of the forest I love,
And sweeter their songs in its shadow,
Though sadder the singing thereof !

To the weary in life's wildernesses
 The soul of the singer belongs :
Small need, in your green, sunny places,
 Glad dwellers, have you of my songs.
For you the blithe birds of the meadow
 Trill silverly sweet, every one,
But I cannot sit in the shadow
 Forever, and sing of the sun.

THE COMING.

I GATHERED flowers the summer long ;

I dozed the days on sunny leas,
And wove my fancies into song,
Or dreamed in aimless ease.

Or watched, from jutting cliffs, the dyes
Of changeful waters under me,
The lazy gulls just dip and rise,
White specks upon the sea —

And far away, where blue to blue
Was wed, the ships that came and went,
And thought, O happy world ! and drew
Therefrom a full content.

My mates toiled in the ripening field,
Nor paused for rest in cool or heat ;
The yellow grain made haste to yield
Its harvesting complete :

My mates toiled in their pleasant homes ;
They plucked the fruit from laden boughs,
And sang — “ For if the Master comes
And find no ready house ! ” —

And far and strange their singing seemed,
 And harsh the voices every one,
That woke the pleasant dream I dreamed
 To thought of tasks undone.

Yet still I waited, lingered still,
 Won by a cloud, a soaring lark ;
Till, by and by, the land was chill,
 And all the sky was dark.

And lo, the Master ! Through the night
 My mates come forth to welcome Him,
Their labor done, their garments white,
 While mine are stained and dim.

They bring to Him their golden sheaves,
 To Him their finished toil belongs,
While I have but these withered leaves,
 And these poor, foolish songs !

MEMORIAL POEM.

WRITTEN FOR THE GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC,
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, DECORATION DAY, 1881.

THE sea-tides ebb and flow;
The seasons come and go,
Summer and sun succeed the cloud and snow,
And April rain awakes the violet.

Earth puts away
Her sombre robes, and cheeks with tear-drops wet
In some sad yesterday
Dimple again with smiles, and half forget
Their grief, as the warm rose
Forgets the night-dews when the noontide glows.

Change follows upon change
Swift as the hours ; and far away, and strange
As the dim memory of night's troubled dream
In dawn's returning beam,
Seem the dark, troubled years,
The sad, but glorious years,
Writ on the nation's heart in blood and tears.

Ah, God ! and yet we know
It was no dream in those days, long ago :

It was no dream, the beat
To arms, the steady tramp along the street
Of answering thousands, quick with word and deed
 Unto their country's need ;
No dream the banners, flinging, fresh and fair,
 Their colors on the air —
Not stained and worn like these
 Returning witnesses,
With sad, dumb lips, most eloquent of those
 Returning nevermore !
Of those on many a hard-fought battlefield,
 From hand to hand that bore
Their starry folds, and, knowing not to yield,
Fell, with a brave front steady to their foes.

Year after year the spring steals back again,
Bringing the bird and blossom in her train,
 Beauty and melody,
 But they return no more !
Borne on what tides of pain,
 Over the unknown sea,
 Unto the unknown shore :
 Amid the pomp and show
Of glittering ranks, the cannon's smoke and roar,
 Tossed in the rock and reel
Of the wild waves of battle to and fro,
Amid the roll of drums, the ring of steel,
The clash of sabre, and the fiery hell
 Of bursting shot and shell,
The scream of wounded steeds, the thunder tones
Of firm command, the prayers, the cheers, the groans, —

War's mingled sounds of triumph and despair
Blending with trumpet-blast and bugle-blare.

But not alone amid the battle wrack
They died, — our brave true men.
By southern glade and glen,
In dark morass, within whose pathless deeps,
The serpent coils and creeps,
They fell, with the fierce bloodhound on their track.
Amid the poisonous breath
Of crowded cells, and the rank, festering death
Of the dread prison-pen ;
From dreary hospital,
And the dear, sheltering wall
Of home, that claimed them but to lose again,
They passed away, — the army of our slain !

O Leader ! tried and true,
What words may speak of thee ?
Last sacrifice divine,
Upon our country's shrine !
O man, that towered above
Thy fellow-men, with heart the tenderest,
And " whitest soul the nation ever knew ! "
Bravest and kingliest !
We lay our sorrow down
Before thee, as a crown ;
We fold thee with our love
In silence : where are words to speak of thee ?

For us the budded laughter of the May
Is beautiful to-day,

Upon the land, but nevermore for them,
 Our heroes gone, the rose upon its stem
 Unfolds, or the fair lily blooms to bless
 Their living eyes, with its pure loveliness ;

No song-bird at the morn
 Greets them with gladness of a day new-born ;
 No kiss of child or wife
 Warms their cold lips again to love and life,
 Breaking sweet slumbers with as sweet release.
 They may not wake again !
 But from the precious soil,
 Born of their toil —
 Nursed with what crimson rain —
 We pluck to-day the snow-white flower of peace.

He does not die, who in a noble cause
 Renders his life : immortal as the laws
 By which God rules the universe is he.

Silence his name may hold,
 His fame untold
 In all the annals of earth's great may be,
 But, bounded by no span
 Of years which rounds the common lot of man,
 Lo ! he is one
 Henceforward, with the work which he has done,
 Whose meed and measure is Eternity.

They are not lost to us, they still are ours,
 They do but rest. Cover their graves with flowers —
 Earth's fairest treasures, fashioned with that skill,
 Which makes the daisy's disk a miracle

No less than man. On monument and urn,
Let their rich fragrance burn,
Like incense on an altar ; softly spread
A royal mantle o'er each unmarked bed,
And, as a jeweled-rain,

Drop their bright petals for the nameless dead
And lonely, scattered wide
On plain and mountain-side,
Beneath the wave, and by the river-tide.

So let them rest
Upon their country's breast.
They have not died in vain :
Through them *she* lives, with head no longer bowed
Among the nations, but erect and proud —
Washed clean of wrong and shame,
Her freedom never more an empty name,
And all her scattered stars as one again.

REBUKE.

“THE world is old and the world is cold,
And never a day is fair,” I said.
Out of the heavens the sunlight rolled,
The green leaves rustled above my head,
And the sea was a sea of gold.

“The world is cruel,” I said again,
“Her voice is harsh to my shrinking ear,
And the nights are dreary and full of pain.”
Out of the darkness, sweet and clear,
There rippled a tender strain,—

Rippled the song of a bird asleep,
That sang in a dream of the budding wood,
Of shining fields where the reapers reap,
Of a wee brown mate and a nestling brood,
And the grass where the berries peep.

“The world is false, though the world be fair,
And never a heart is pure,” I said.
And lo! the clinging of white arms bare,
The innocent gold of my baby’s head,
And the lisp of a childish prayer.

AT THE CLOSE.

YOUTH, that is sweetest, lies still, lies chill in death !

Close the clear eyelids upon the tender eyes,
And hush the pleadings no murmur answereth,
And still the kisses that waken no replies.

White-limbed he lieth, dead youth, so strong, so fair, —

And O, for slumber that woke to happy days !
And O, the moonlights, the golden dreams that were,
And O, the glory of life's long pleasant ways !

Fair were the faces his eyes have looked upon,

But these are haggard, and wan, and very sad.

Sweet the love-laughters, and red the lips he won, —

But here is silence of lips no longer glad.

So, part the branches, where light falls long between,

And plait the grasses about his feet and head ;

Here his loved summer shall wear her softest green,

And winds just ruffle the fringes of his bed.

His were the roses washed sweeter in the dew,

And his the rapture life knoweth not again ;

But ours the tempest, the skies no longer blue,

For tender sunlight, and tender, falling rain.

FREEDOM.

MINE, to loose or to hold,
I held it, thus, in my hand.
Mine, to fetter or free —
Which should it be ?
Dear little wings of gold,
Dear little voice that trilled
All the gay summer long,
Making each day a song !
Well, but one tires at times
Of even one's favorite rhymes ;
Of roses, oversweet,
Of joys that are too complete,
Of all things in one's reach ;
And just to be alone
With silence sweeter than speech,
Seems best of all things known.
Mine to command,
Hold captive, as I willed :
Little light wings, away !
Into the golden day,
Away, away, —
Into the golden sky —
Good-by ! good-by !

That was a year ago :
Was it well, was it wiser so ?
Shall I ever, ever know ?
A whole long weary year,
And summer is here :
But the rose a redness lacks,
And the sun is chill,
And the world, somehow, too still,
And time a dreary tax
On body and heart and brain.
Would it be less, I wonder,
If I could only hear
A piping, soft and clear,
A little mellow strain
Come back again ?
Or see the flutterings
Of dainty golden wings,
That clove heaven's blue asunder,
Away and away from me
Away and away,
On one poor foolish day ?
Ah, well ! was it so to be,
And better so ?
I shall never, never know.
It is gone — let it go.
But O, for the dear love-strain
Mine once, mine never again !
For the fluttering wings of gold,
Mine to loose or to hold —
Held lightly, loosened — so —
A year ago !

FREDERICK III. OF GERMANY.

THERE fell a King ! Not king alone in blood,
Nor royal throne by right of which he reigned,
But by the royalty of soul unstained,
And heart that beat but for his people's good.

A warrior, yet beyond the battlefield
The larger victories of peace he knew ;
His life, a pledge to aims divinely true,
Most patient suffering divinely sealed.

There fell a King ? Nay, there a king arose !
Stars do not set in night, though night goes down :
Steadfast they gleam in heaven's eternal crown
Though days in nights and nights in days may close.

“Lord of himself,” that greatest conqueror,
No nobler form in all his noble house,
Dead, the imperial crown still sits his brows,
And past the grave he still is emperor !

UNGATHERED.

NEVER a leaf is shorn
But the vine surely misses ;
From ministering night-dews torn,
From the sun's kisses.

Dozing the warm light in,
In cool winds rustling greenly,
A leaflet with its leafy kin
Dwelling serenely.

Not ever bud doth fall
With blighted leaves yet folden,
Never to wear its coronal
Or white or golden,

But from the mother-stem
Flutters a far, faint sighing :
Is it a tender requiem
Above the dying ?

Who knows what dear regrets
Cling to the blossom broken ?
Who knows what voiceless longing frets,
What love unspoken ?

So through the summer-shine,
Your frail, brief lives securely
Keep, all ye tender blossoms mine,
Looking up purely.

Enough to breathe the air
Made sweet with your perfuming,
To see through golden days your fair
And perfect blooming,

The bees that round you hum,
The butterflies that woo you,
And happy, happy birds that come
And sing unto you.

THE LOST NOTE.

In winter-time one steadfast hope I had :
When rains should cease to fall,
And earth re-summon all
Her blossom-guests, I should again be glad.

And then, my heart unlifted still, I said,
Too pallid and too chill
These skies, wait yet until
The summer's serene blue smiles overhead.

Its red the rose surrenders to the leaves ;
The orchard branches yield
Their fruit, and far afield
The reapers sing amid their gathered sheaves.

The circle of the year is all complete ;
And in its wintry hour,
In fruitage or in flower,
I know the world is very fair and sweet.

I know that not from land, or sky, or sea,
The restless spirit takes
Its sombre hues, and makes
A discord of God's golden harmony.

Within, some false note jars the perfect strain
The great Musician meant. . . .
O bird of lost content,
Come back, and build, and brood, and sing again !

THE UNKNOWN GREAT.

NOT to the brave upon the battle-field
Alone, the palms of victory belong,
Nor only to the great of earth the song
Of praise and pæan should the singer yield.
Greater the souls, who, single-handed, wield
The battle-axe against the hosts of wrong,
Unknown, unnoted, in life's reckless throng,
And only in God's day to stand revealed.
Ah, by our side in patient, humble guise,
How many walk the silent conqueror's way! —
As fixëd stars in fame's eternal skies
Their stainless lustre worthiest to shine.
Unlaureled heroes! reverently I lay
Low at your feet this tribute leaf of mine.

AT PEACE.

SHUT close the wearied eyes, O Sleep !
So close no dreams may come between,
Of all the sorrows they have seen :
Too long, too sad, their watch hath been.
Be faithful, Sleep,
Lest they should wake, remiembering ;
Lest they should wake, and waking weep,
O Sleep, sweet Sleep !

Clasp close the wearied hands, O Rest !
Poor hands, so thin and feeble grown
With all the tasks which they have done ;
Now they are finished, every one.
O happy Rest,
Fold them at last from laboring,
In quiet on the quiet breast,
O Rest, sweet Rest !

Press close unto her heart, O Death !
So close, not any pulse may stir
The garments of her sepulchre ;
Lo, life hath been so sad to her !
O kindest Death,
Within thy safest sheltering
Nor pain nor sorrow entereth —
O Death, sweet Death !

THE ART OF WILLIAM KEITH.

HERE, vast and awful, the Sierras rear
Their everlasting summits to the sky ;
The mighty waters of the sunset lie
In all their changing opalescence ; here
The brooding melancholy of the sere,
Dun autumn woods ; the laughing leafery
Of budding boughs, blending each tender dye
With the lush green of the awakening year.
This is not painted canvas, — this is life,
Creation, earth, in all her varying moods !
These fields a-thrill with motion and with light,
These forest-ways, with dream and mystery rife !
Here nature's heart throbs through the solitudes !
Here nature's soul looks from the mystic height.

THE BROOK.

THROUGH the dreary winter,
 Ice-locked, white, and chill !
All its laughter sleeping,
 All its music still ;
Not a flower to love it
From the bank above it ;
 Not a bird to trill,
In its ripples laving
 Yellow wing and bill ;
No green, shadowy silence,
 Where one may go at will,
And dream and dream one's fill.

Without voice or color,
 In a barren land ;
Dripping skies bent over,
 Dripping trees that stand,
Forlorn, on either hand.

But a little sunshine —
 How its voice shall wake !
Over sand and pebble
 Ring the silver treble,
Glad for summer's sake.



"HOW ITS VOICE SHALL WAKE!"

Fairy boats shall ride it,
Lovers walk beside it,
Birds build in the brake ;
Flowers and flowering sedges
Laugh along its edges —
Glad, for summer's sake !

Just a little sunshine,
And the clouds will part ;
All its fettered beauty
Into life will start.
Be glad, thou shining rover,
With bird, and bee, and clover ;
Sing summer through and over,
Ah, happy that thou art! . .
Just a little sunshine —
O my heart, my heart !

A PRAYER.

O soul ! however sweet
The goal to which I hasten with swift feet —
 If, just within my grasp,
 I reach, and joy to clasp,
And find there one whose body I must make
 A footstool for that sake,
Though ever and for evermore denied,
 Grant me to turn aside !

O howsoever dear
The love I long for, seek, and find anear —
 So near, so dear, the bliss
 Sweetest of all that is,
If I must win by treachery or art,
 Or wrong one other heart,
Though it should bring me death, my soul, that day
 Grant me to turn away !

That in the life so far
And yet so near, I be without a scar
Of wounds dealt others ; greet with lifted eyes
 The pure of Paradise !
 So I may never know
The agony of tears I caused to flow !

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

“WHAT gift hast thou for Me,
The Crucified for thee ?”

No worthy thing :
Nor song, nor praise, nor tears,
From all these many years,
Jesus, my King.

“In ways thy feet have sought,
In that thy hands have wrought,
Whatso for Me ?”

Ah, in those dreary walks,
Behold the flowerless stalks,
The fruitless tree !

“Thy heart hath love, at least —
I crave thy love.” O Priest,
It were not meet
From bitter wells to slake
Thy thirst. Touch Thou and make
Its waters sweet.

“Thy soul — that it may live !”
Is it then mine to give ?
O Saviour, cease !

Like to a troubled sea,
My spirit is in me :
 Lord, speak it peace.

“ Unto thy Friend, thy King,
Hast then no offering,
 No gift to give ? ”
For all Thy love, Thy care,
Only one little prayer :
 Saviour, forgive !

OBLIVION.

BEYOND the flight of hours,
Beneath the rooted flowers,
Where winter rain, nor showers
 Of April fall,
Where days that say “Alas !”
Forget to come, to pass ;
And joy or grief that was,
 Is ended all.

There never sunlight gleams ;
There sleep begets not dreams ;
Therein no voice of streams,
 Nor voice of trees.
From shadow into sun,
From light to shadow won,
No shining rivers run
 To shining seas.

No birds of morning throat
Their joy from skies remote ;
From the still leaves no note
 On either hand ;

No love-lorn nightingale,
To sing while stars wax pale,
And moonlight, as a veil,
Is on the land.

Many the dwellers are
Within that valley far,
Lit by nor sun nor star,
Where no dawn is ;
Where sleep broods as a dove,
And love forgot of love,
The dead delights thereof
Can never miss.

Wherein is spoken word,
Nor any laughter heard ;
The eyelids are not stirred
By touch of tears ;
Wherein the poet's brain
The rapture and the pain
Of song knows not again,
Through all the years.

Pale leaves of poppies shed
About the brows and head,
From whence the laurel, dead,
Is dropped to dust.
Strength laid in armor down
To mould, and on the gown
The mould, and on the crown
The mould and rust.

So evermore they lie :
The ages pass them by,
Them doth the Earth deny,
 And Time forget ;
Void in the years, the ways,
As a star loosed from space,
Upon whose vacant place
 The sun is set.

LA FLOR DEL SALVADOR.

THE Daffodil sang: “Darling of the sun
Am I, am I, that wear
His colors everywhere.”

The Violet pleaded soft, in undertone:
“Am I less perfect made,
Or hidden in the shade
So close and deep, that heaven may not see
Its own fair hue in me?”

The Rose stood up, full-blown,
Right royal as a Queen upon her throne:
“Nay, but I reign alone,”
She said, “with all hearts for my very own.”

One whispered, with faint flush, not far away:
“I am the eye of day,
And all men love me;” and with drowsy sighs,
A Lotus, from the still pond where she lay,
Breathed, “I am precious balm for weary eyes.”

Only the fair field Lily, slim and tall,
Spake not for all,
Spake not and did not stir,
Lapsed in some far and tender memory.

Softly I questioned her,
“ And what of thee? ”

And winds were lulled about the bended head,
And the warm sunlight swathed her as in flame,
While the awed answer came,
“ Hath HE not said? ”

TO-DAY'S SINGING.

WEAVE me a rhyme to-day, —
No pleasant roundelay,
But some vague, restless yearning of the heart,
 Shaped with but little art
To broken numbers, that shall flow
 Most dreamily and slow.
I think no merry fancy should belong
 To this day's song.

Look how the maple stands,
 Waving its bleeding hands
With such weird gestures ; and the petals fall
From the dry roses, pale, nor longer sweet ;
 And by the garden-wall
The unclasped vines, and all
These sad, dead leaves, a-rustle at our feet.
 Dear bodies of the flowers,
From which the little fragrant souls are fled,
 Beside you, lying dead,
We say, "Another summer shall be ours
When all these naked boughs shall flush and flame
With fresh, young blossoms." Ay, but not the same !
And that is saddest. By the living bloom,
Who cares for last year's beauty — in the tomb ?

Spring, blossom, and decay.
Ah, poet, sing thy day —
So brief a day, alas ! . . .
Beloved, and shall we pass
Beneath the living grass,
Out from the glad, warm splendor of the sun ?
A little dust about some old tree's root,
With all our voices mute,
And all our singing done ?

FRUITIONLESS.

AH ! little flower, up-springing, azure-eyed,
The meadow-brook beside,
Dropping delicious balms
Into the tender palms
Of lover-winds, that woo with light caress,—
In still contentedness,
Living and blooming thy brief summer-day.
So wiser far than I,
That only dream and sigh,
And sighing, dream my listless life away.

Ah ! sweet-heart birds, a-building your wee house,
In the broad-leavēd boughs,
Pausing with merry trill
To praise each other's skill,
And nod your pretty heads with pretty pride ;
Serenely satisfied
To trill and twitter love's sweet roundelay.
So happier than I,
That, lonely, dream and sigh,
And sighing, dream my lonely life away.

Brown-bodied bees, that scent with nostrils fine
The odorous blossom-wine,
Sipping, with heads half thrust
Into the pollen dust

Of rose and hyacinth and daffodil,
To hive, in amber cell,
A honey feasting for the winter-day.
So better far than I,
Self-wrapt, that dream and sigh,
And sighing, dream my useless life away.

AFTER THE WINTER RAIN.

AFTER the winter rain,
 Sing, robin ! sing, swallow !
Grasses are in the lane,
 Buds and flowers will follow.

Woods shall ring, blithe and gay,
 With bird-trill and twitter,
Though the skies weep to-day,
 And the winds are bitter.

Though deep call unto deep
 As calls the thunder,
And white the billows leap
 The tempest under ;

Softly the waves shall come
 Up the long, bright beaches,
With dainty flowers of foam
 And tenderest speeches. . . .

After the wintry pain,
 And the long, long sorrow,
Sing, heart ! — for thee again
 Joy comes with the morrow.

DAISIES.

WHEREFORE is it, as I pass
Through the fragrant meadow-grass,
That the daisies, nestling shyly in sweet places,
Lifting crispy, curly heads
From their wee, warm clover-beds,
Seem to my imagining little elfin faces ?

Can it be the daisies speak ?
Leaning rosy cheek to cheek,
In a merry gossiping, lightly nodding after ?
Or a fancy, that I heard
Just the faintest whispered word,
And a silver-echoing ripple of soft laughter ?

AN EMBLEM.

I WAITED for a single flower to blow,
While all about me flowers were running wild :
Gold-hearted kingcups, sunnily that smiled,
And daisies, like fresh-fallen flakes of snow,
And rarest violets, sweet whole colonies
Nestled in shady grasses by the brooks,
That sang, for love of them and their sweet looks,
Delicious melodies.

Now they are perished, all the fragile throng,
That held their sweetness up to me in vain.
Only this single blossom doth remain,
For whose unfolding I have waited long,
Thinking, " How rare a bloom these petals clasp ! "
And lo ! a sickly, dwarfed, and scentless thing,
Mocking my love and its close nourishing,
And withering in my grasp.

O dream ! O hope ! O promise of long years !
Art thou a flower that I have nurtured so,
Missing the every-day sweet joys that grow
By common pathways ; moistened with my tears,
Watched through the dreary day and sleepless night,
And all about thy slender rootlets cast
My life like water, but to find at last
A bitterness and blight ?

HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

(“H. H.”)

WHAT songs found voice upon those lips,
 What magic dwelt within the pen,
Whose music into silence slips,
 Whose spell lives not again !

For her the clamorous to-day
 The dreamful yesterday became ;
The brands upon dead hearths that lay
 Leaped into living flame.

Clear ring the silvery Mission bells
 Their calls to vesper and to mass ;
O'er vineyard slopes, thro' fruited dells,
 The long processions pass ;

The pale Franciscan lifts in air
 The Cross above the kneeling throng ;
Their simple world how sweet with prayer,
 With chant and matin-song !

There, with her dimpled, lifted hands,
 Parting the mustard's golden plumes,
The dusky maid, Ramona, stands
 Amid the sea of blooms.

And Alessandro, type of all
His broken tribe, for evermore
An exile, hears the stranger call
Within his father's door.

The visions vanish and are not,
Still are the sounds of peace and strife,
Passed with the earnest heart and thought
Which lured them back to life.

O, sunset land ! O, land of vine,
And rose, and bay ! in silence here
Let fall one little leaf of thine,
With love, upon her bier.

A GOOD-BY.

GOOD-BY !

Under whatever sky
Thy pathway be,
Near or afar,

Clear be its light of sun, its light of star :

Bright as the memory
We hold of thee,
Good-by !

Good-by !

Let not our parting sigh
Be wholly lost in the new words that greet.

New loves may be as sweet,
New friends may serve as surely,
Hold as dearly, love as purely,
But never hearts may be
Truer than these whose thoughts go after thee, —

Good-by !

Good-by !

SUFFICIENT.

CITRON, pomegranate,
 Apricot, and peach,
Flutter of apple-blows
 Whiter than the snow,
Filling the silence
 With their leafy speech,
Budding and blooming
 Down row after row.

Breaths of blown spices,
 Which the meadows yield,
Blossoms broad-petaled,
 Starry buds and small ;
Gold of the hill-sides,
 Purple of the field,
Waft to my nostrils
 Their fragrance, one and all.

Birds in the tree-tops,
 Birds that fill the air,
Trilling, piping, singing,
 In their merry moods, —
Gold wing and brown wing,
 Flitting here and there,
To the coo and chirrup
 Of their downy broods.

What grace has summer
 Better that can suit?
What gift can autumn
 Bring us more to please?
Red of blown roses,
 Mellow tints of fruit,
Never can be fairer,
 Sweeter than are these.

TO A NEW BEATRICE.

(B. G.: BORN JANUARY 28, 1895.)

ROBED as with petals of the red rose-queen,
Unfolding in the dawn's awakening rays,
She stood, a child, before the boy's rapt gaze ;
And then, a milk-white lily maid, between
Her noble ladies, smiled, with gracious mien ;
And then an Angel in the heavenly ways,
She leaned and drew his soul from death's dark
maze,
The lode-star of the mighty Florentine.
And thou, our Beatrice ! with thy perfect name,
O daughter of the New World's Italy,
Be potent still the spell which in it lies :
A light to shine with clear, unwavering flame,
And draw the world — thy Dante — after thee,
Along the paths which lead to Paradise.

SOMETIMES.

UNTO the earth the Summer comes again :
She has, to quench her thirst, the dews and rain ;
 She has glad light about her all life's hour,
 And love for gracious dower.

She makes the valleys pleasant for the herds ;
Her seeds and berries ripen for the birds,
 And cool about their nests she deftly weaves
 A screen of tender leaves.

Her soft, delicious breath revives the land ;
Her many flowers she feeds with lavish hand,
 Clothes the bare hill, and to the rugged place
 Gives comeliness and grace.

To all things else she cometh, once a year,
With strong, new life, with beauty and glad cheer ;
 To all things else : ah ! sometime, it must be
 That she will come to me !

FORGOTTEN.

OH, my heart, when life is done,
How happy will the hour be !
All its restless errands run,
Noontide past, and set of sun,
And the long, long night begun,—
How happy will the hour be !

Sunlight, like a butterfly,
Drop down and kiss the roses !
Starlight, softly come and lie
Where dreamful slumber closes !
But death, sweet death, be nigh, be nigh,
Where love in peace reposes !

QUEST.

THE green leaves grow and grow,
And the birds build in the trees ;
Ah, sweethearts, could I linger, linger,
With soul at ease !

O long, cool vineyard rows,
The path is blind with heat ;
With you rest is, and sound of waters,
And shadow sweet.

The dry leaves fall and fall ;
The days grow less in the sun :
I falter, fail, and my soul is weary —
The quest unwon.

It may come with the morn !
It may come with the night !
O near, far Hope, I follow, follow,
From dark to light ?

LINES

ON HEARING KELLEY'S MUSIC OF "MACBETH."

O MELODY, what children strange are these
From thy most vast, illimitable realm ?
These sounds that seize upon and overwhelm
The soul with shuddering ecstasy ! Lo ! here
The night is, and the deeds that make night fear ;
Wild winds and waters, and the sough of trees
Tossed in the tempest ; wail of spirits banned,
Wandering, unhoused of clay, in the dim land ;
The incantation of the Sisters Three,
Nameless of deed and name,— the mystic chords
Weird repetitions of the mystic words ;
The mad, remorseful terrors of the Thane,
And bloody hands — which bloody must remain.
Last, the wild march ; the battle hand to hand
Of clashing arms, in awful harmony,
Sublimely grand, and terrible as grand !
The clan-cries ; the barbaric trumpetry ;
And the one fateful note, that, throughout all,
Leads, follows, calls, compels, and holds in thrall.

SUMMONS.

O long, swinging bells of pomegranate !
O orange-buds, falling as snow !
O singing of lark and of linnet,
Singing high in the leaves, singing low,
Can you sing to my heart, can you win it
One moment to these, ere I go ?

What flowers shall be sweeter than these are ?
What sky shall be blue as this sky ?
As a fair, fringëd girdle the trees are,
About the green place where I lie,
And the swarms of the brown honey-bees are
As clouds over clover and rye.

But ah ! for the singing of swallows
What thought, though the singing be sweet ?
What ease, though the grass of the hollows
And hills be as down to my feet ?
Love beckons, the ready heart follows,
How fleet to the summons, how fleet !

And unto the dove, as she cooeth,
It's O, for the wings of the dove ! —
And unto the wind, as it bloweth,
For the pinions and fleetness thereof —
That the feet unto where the heart goeth
May be swift, may be swift, to my love !

IN ADVERSITY.

FRIENDS whom I feasted in my luxury,
In sorrow turned from me.

A hundred servitors, that once did wait
Upon my high estate,

Me — desolate, forsaken, old, and poor —
Thrust from my own house-door.

Only that One whom I in joy forgot,
My fault remembered not,

And in my tears of late-born penitence
Drove me not, scorning, hence.

His strong arm raised me where I prostrate fell ;
He made my bruised heart well ;

My thirst He quenched ; my hunger gave He bread ;
And my weak steps He led

Through the blind dark of desert sands, to where
His fresh, green pastures were.

O, calm and fair the days, and all delights
Make beautiful the nights !

O, fair the nights, and beautiful the days,
Within these quiet ways !

What need is there which He may not supply ?
Familiar steps go by,

And well-known voices die upon my ear —
But He is ever near !

The vision of all beauty and all grace
Is in His perfect face.

Sweeter His voice is than the melodies
Wherewith I lulled my ease.

Wisdom and truth, and measures of sweet song,
Unto His words belong, —

And to my lowly roof His presence brings
Splendor exceeding kings' !

MIDWINTER EAST AND WEST.

No flower in all the land —
No leaf upon the tree,
Blossom, or bud, or fruit,
But an icy fringe instead ;
And the birds are flown, or dead,
And the world is mute.
The white, cold moonbeams shiver
On the dark face of the river,
While still and slow the waters flow
Out to the open sea ;
The moveless pine-trees stand,
Black fortressed on the hill ;
And white, and cold, and still,
Wherever the eye may go,
The ghostly snow :
The vast, unbroken silences of snow.

I look out upon the night,
And the darkly flowing river,
And the near stars, with no quiver
In their calm and steady light,
And listen for the voice of the great sea,
And the silence answers me.

O Sea of the West, that comes
With a sound as of rolling drums,
With a muffled beat
As of marching feet,
Up the long lifts of sand,
The golden drifts of sand,
On the long, long shining strand.
An opal, rimmed with blue,
An emerald, shining through
The pearl's and ruby's dyes,
And crests that catch the blaze
Of the diamond's rays,
Under thy perfect skies !

O Land of the West, I know
How the field flowers bud and blow,
And the grass springs and the grain,
To the first soft touch and summons of the rain.
O, the music of the rain !
O, the music of the streams !
Dream music, heard in dreams,
As I listen through the night,
While the snow falls, still and white.
I hear the branches sway
In the breeze's play,
And the forests' solemn hymns :
Almost I hear the stir
Of the sap in their mighty limbs
Like blood in living veins !
The rose is in the lanes,
And the insects buzz and whir ;

And where the purple fills
The spaces of the hills,
In one swift month the poppy will lift up
Its golden cup.

And O, and O, in the sunshine and the rain,
Rings out that perfect strain,—
The earth's divinest song !

My bird, with the plain, brown breast,
My lark of the golden west,

Up, up, thy joy notes soar,

And sorrow is no more,

And pain has passed away
In the rapture of thy lay !

Up, up, the glad notes throng,

And the soul is borne along

On the pinions of thy song,

Up from the meadow's sod,

Up from the world's unrest,

To peace, to heaven, to God !

And I listen through the silence of the night,
While the snow falls, still and white.

THE FADED FLOWER.

M. C. P.

WE watched in the dear home-garden
Our tenderest flower that grew :
Never a budling rarer
The sun of the ages knew !

And we said, “ When our leaves shall wither,
Our petals shall drop away,
The grace of this perfect blossom
Shall brighten our own decay.”

Never the dews shall nourish,
Never the tender rain ;
Never the sun’s warm kisses
Shall crimson thy lips again !

O heart of our hearts, May-blossom,
Hope of our lessening day,
The bloom and the grace and the fragrance,
Are passed with thy breath away !

MILLENNIUM.

THE night falls, heavy with the coming storm !
 Far out, the ocean frets against the bar,
And the cloud-legions, gathering force and form,
 Shut, with closed ranks, all gleam of moon or star.
Tempestuous darkness ! and unto the dawn,
 Long hours. Ah ! with the passing will there be
The gold and crimson by the sun-rays drawn,
 Or tempest still, and moaning of the sea ?

The world is heavy with the coming storm !
 No nation wars with nation, race with race,
But where the love-pulse should beat quick and warm,
 Lo ! brother against brother, face to face.
Abel unto the god of blood gives blood,
 Who heeds not the fair fruitage of the land,
And wrong and rage, of viper-nests the brood,
 Arm Cain with flaming heart and flaming brand.

Where is the peace that should with thee abide
 O Earth ? Art still beneath the primal ban,
Availing naught the Holy Crucified ?
 No faith in God because no faith in man !
Thy helpless idols help thee not — Awake !
 Arise, and let thy weary burden fall !
Captive, the fetters of the ages break,
 And, thrall to Mammon, be no longer thrall.

O Spirit of the Holy One, from where
On high Thou dwellest, lend Thy loving will
To quell these battle-giants of the air,
 And to the warring waters speak, "Be still."
Or if from darkness, only, springs the light,
 And but from struggle blesseg peace is born,
Loose all the awful thunders of Thy might —
 And hail, the night! that heralds the glad morn.

COPA DE ORO.

(CALIFORNIA POPPY.)

THY satin vesture richer is than looms
 Of Orient weave for raiment of her kings !
Not dyes of olden Tyre, not precious things
Regathered from the long-forgotten tombs
Of buried empires, not the iris plumes
 That wave upon the tropics' myriad wings,
Not all proud Sheba's queenly offerings,
Could match the golden marvel of thy blooms.
For thou art nurtured from the treasure-veins
 Of this fair land : thy golden rootlets sup
 Her sands of gold — of gold thy petals spun.
Her golden glory, thou ! on hills and plains,
 Lifting, exultant, every kingly cup
 Brimmed with the golden vintage of the sun.

EDWIN BOOTH.

IN vision, I beheld by Avon's side
The mighty Shakespeare, and a wondrous train —
The vast creations of that matchless brain —
Walked with him through the dusk of eventide.
Slowly the dim procession, solemn-eyed,
Therewith the tawny Moor, and Cawdor's thane,
And, soul most sorrowful, the princely Dane,
Passed, and repassed into the shadows wide.
Then, with a sense of overmastering awe,
And listening heart that scarcely seemed to stir,
I woke : to lapsing centuries of time,
To throngéd walls, and blaze of lights, and saw —
Not Shakespeare — but his grand Interpreter,
Than thought's great master only less sublime.

THE FLIGHT OF SONG.

How may the poet sing
When Song is far away ?
He has no charm to bring,
No power of yea or nay,
To lure that peerless wing,
To bid it go or stay.
How may the poet sing,
With Song so far away ?

Bind — and her voice is dumb ;
She droops, she dies.
Loose her — no echoes come
From her far skies.
Farther she mounts, and higher ;
Elate, elusive still,
She knows alone one will —
Her own desire.
O lingering delay !
When, lo, on one glad day,
Into the heart she slips
With swift surprise !
Her touch upon the lips,
Upon the eyes,
And all life's pulses thrill,
And all the world is spring —
Is spring in Paradise :
Then may the poet sing !



"O SKIES, SERENE AND BLUE!"

MEADOW-LARKS.

SWEET, sweet, sweet! O happy that I am!

(Listen to the meadow-larks, across the fields that sing!)

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O subtle breath of balm,

O winds that blow, O buds that grow, O rapture of the spring!

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O skies, serene and blue,

That shut the velvet pastures in, that fold the mountain's crest!

Sweet, sweet, sweet! What of the clouds ye knew?

'The vessels ride a golden tide, upon a sea at rest.

Sweet, sweet, sweet! Who prates of care and pain?

Who says that life is sorrowful? O life so glad, so fleet!

Ah! he who lives the noblest life finds life the noblest gain,

The tears of pain a tender rain to make its waters sweet.

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O happy world that is!

Dear heart, I hear across the fields my mateling pipe and call.

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O world so full of bliss,—

For life is love, the world is love, and love is over all!

CHRISTMAS EVE.

PEACE in thy snowy breast,
O cloud, from storms at rest !
 Peace in the winds that sleep
 Upon the deep.

Peace in the starry height :
Peace infinite
 Through all the worlds that move
 Within His love.

O all sad hearts, that be
On land or on the sea,
 God's peace with you rest light
 This Christmas night !

And with the souls that stand
In that dear land
 Where pain and all tears cease,
 Most perfect peace !

A MEMORY.

THROUGH rifts of cloud the moon's soft silver slips ;

A little rain has fallen with the night,
Which from the emerald under-sky still drips

Where the magnolias open, broad and white.

So near my window I might reach my hand

And touch these milky stars, that to and fro
Wave, odorous. . . . Yet 't was in another land —

How long ago, my love, how long ago !

FULFILLMENT.

For the fledgeling bird-life stilled,
 Its wings untaught,
 Its music all untrilled ;
For the poet's voiceless thought,
 The song unsung ;
For the loving heart unsought ;
 Hope, fair and sweet and young,
 Dead, nor forgot ;
For the seed that is not sown,
 And the bud that falls unblown,
 What shall atone ?

Somewhere the seed must spring,
 The song be sung ;
Somewhere, green boughs among,
 The bird must sing,
 Must brood and build ;
Somewhere the heart be wooed ;
Somewhere, far out of pain,
 Hope, fair and strong, again
 Rise from the tomb.
Somewhere, for God is good,
 Life's blossoms, unfulfilled,
 Must spring from dust and gloom
 To perfect bloom.

A LAST WORD.

(TO MY MOTHER.)

Not more removed with the long years' increase,
Through hours when storms upon thy roof of clay
Have beat, or when the blossom of the May
Has to the fettered winter smiled release,—
Not from my heart one thought of thee could cease,
O loved and mourned to-day as on that day
When from my sight thy presence passed away,
Thou spirit of all gentleness and peace.
Nay, in the long, long ways I walk alone,
Still with me ! on my brow thy touch is laid
Softly, — when all too great my burden grown . . .
And I shall go, serenely, unafraid,
Into the dark — well knowing what dear tone —
Whose hand to mine — O thou belovëd Shade !

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